



THE  
**WEDDING SCHOOL**  
**POST-WEDDING CLIENT PROBLEMS**



# THE REALITY OF UPSET CLIENTS

- ▶ No matter what you do, eventually you will have an upset client
- ▶ It happens to everyone
- ▶ Sometimes it's your fault...
- ▶ ...sometimes it's not
- ▶ The client may not always be right, but they always the client
- ▶ You cannot safeguard against all complaints
- ▶ No matter how much you manage expectations, things happen





# SET YOUR SAFEGUARDS

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- ▶ Have a good, solid contract that has been approved by your lawyer
- ▶ Have clear guidelines for what you do, when you do it, and when it's due to clients
- ▶ Have good insurance
- ▶ Manage expectations on all fronts as best you can before and during the wedding
- ▶ Keep communication clear and concise, always





A bride in a sparkling dress and veil smiling.

# WHEN CLIENTS COMPLAIN

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- ▶ Be honest - was it your fault?
- ▶ Was it your fault...even sort of?
- ▶ Is there anything you could have done to prevent it?
- ▶ It's not personal, it's just business
- ▶ How you handle the initial complaint is very important and sets the tone for the rest of the situation



# HOW TO REACT

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- ▶ Get the client on the phone, no matter how much you don't want to
- ▶ Acknowledge that it's hard to voice a complaint
- ▶ Ask them to explain, then listen
- ▶ Do not speak unless to answer questions
- ▶ Let them talk until they're done
- ▶ Ask what they'd like you to do at this point





# HOW TO RESPOND

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- ▶ Will doing what they want make the problem go away?
- ▶ Will doing what they want really make things better?
- ▶ Is what they are asking for reasonable or appropriate?
- ▶ How far are you willing to go to make it better?
- ▶ It's not personal, it's just business



# BE TRUE TO YOURSELF

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- ▶ Do not let clients bully you
- ▶ Do not let the fear of bad reviews lead you to make decisions you're not comfortable with
- ▶ Don't be afraid to stand up for yourself
- ▶ Explanations are not excuses
- ▶ It's absolutely okay to say no to their request, it's okay to say "This is not my responsibility." You can disagree with respect!



# PROBLEMS + SOLUTIONS



# LOST CARDS

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- ▶ Have a system before this problem happens
- ▶ Shoot cameras with backup cards that you never remove
- ▶ Look everywhere : the venue, your car, the laundry basket, everywhere
- ▶ Contact the venue and offer up a reward
- ▶ If all else fails, tell the client the truth
- ▶ NEVER LIE





# LOST/CORRUPT IMAGES

- ▶ Have a system before this problem happens
- ▶ Shoot cameras with backup cards that you never remove
- ▶ Try all card recovery software options
- ▶ Call PPA and see if they can help
- ▶ If all else fails, tell the client the truth
- ▶ NEVER LIE

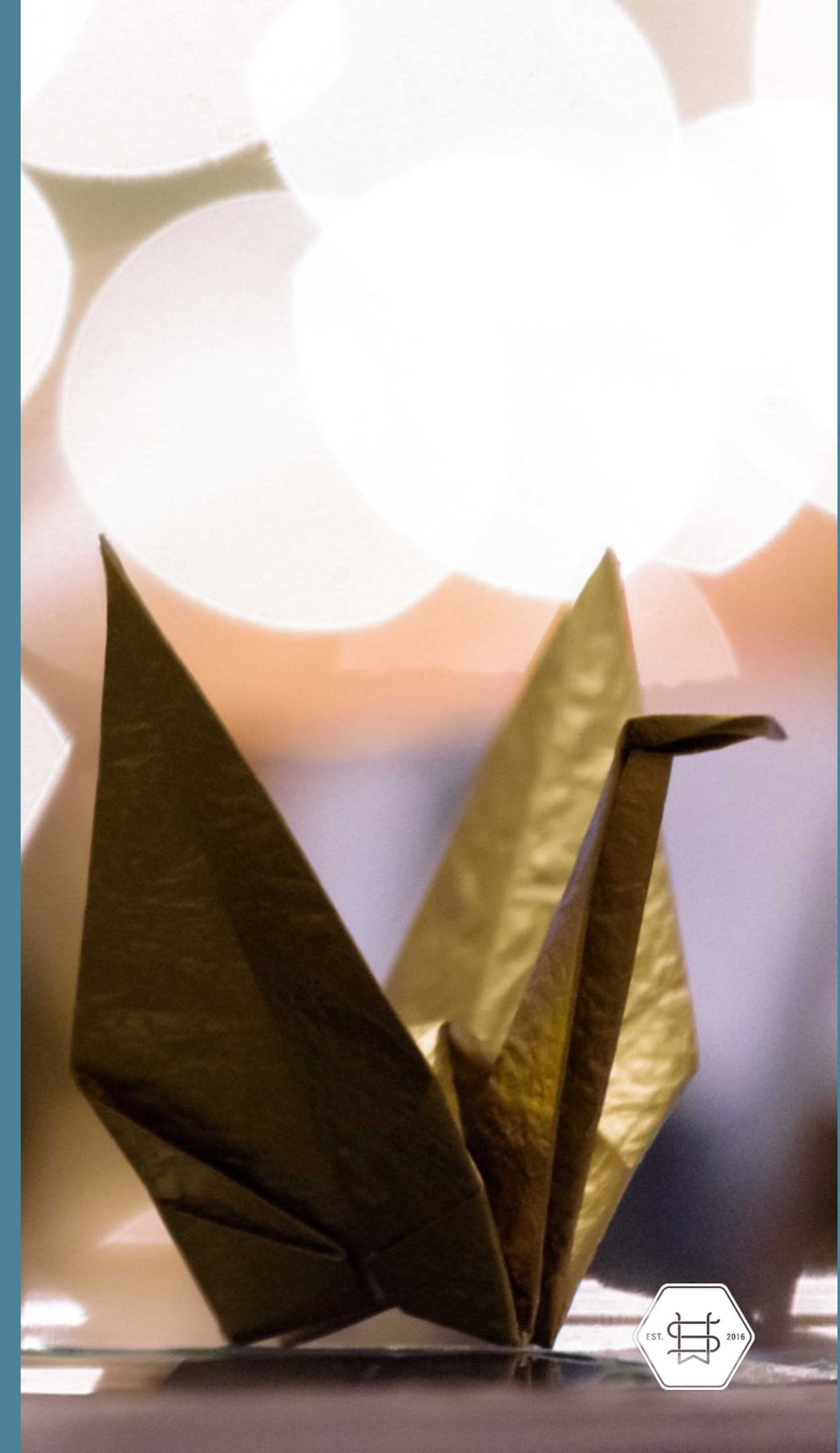




# PARENTS UNHAPPY

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- ▶ Bride signed the contract, parents paid, now parents are unhappy with how the coverage went
- ▶ Make sure clients talk to their parents beforehand
- ▶ I recommend that they talk to their parents when I send out the wedding day worksheet
- ▶ Who is your client?
- ▶ If the parents push too hard, refer them back to the client







# MISSED MOMENTS

- ▶ Is this on you, or them?
- ▶ If a moment happened when you weren't around, what can you do?
- ▶ If you actually missed a moment, apologize
- ▶ One missed moment does not constitute a full refund, an album, or something major for free
- ▶ Manage this expectation before the wedding : you cannot capture everything always, no matter how many shooters you have with you



“Why does my New Jersey catering hall wedding not look super grand and fancy like that super grand and fancy wedding you shot that one time in New York at that venue that costs \$25,000 just to rent the space and the clients spent \$150,000 on decor?”





“Why are there more images of the bride’s side of the family? The groom’s side of the family? The bridal party? My third cousin? Why are there more images of the bride than the groom? Why are there more images of the cake cutting than the bouquet toss?”





**“Why are there more images in those galleries we saw before we booked you than in our gallery?”**





“I hate my wedding pictures because it rained in all of the pictures, and there is no sun. Or it was cloudy and there was no sun. Why does it look so rainy at my rainy, cloudy wedding?”





**“Are there more?”**





**“Can we see all of the  
outtakes? Can we have the  
raw files?”**





“Why didn’t you do table shots? Or a shot of my bouquet on my train? I thought those were standard shots that all wedding photographers knew to get.”





“My mom was wearing a black dress, but it was supposed to be navy blue. Can you photoshop that? My sister broke up with her boyfriend and he’s in a lot of pictures. Can you photoshop that? I don’t like my hair, can you photoshop that?”





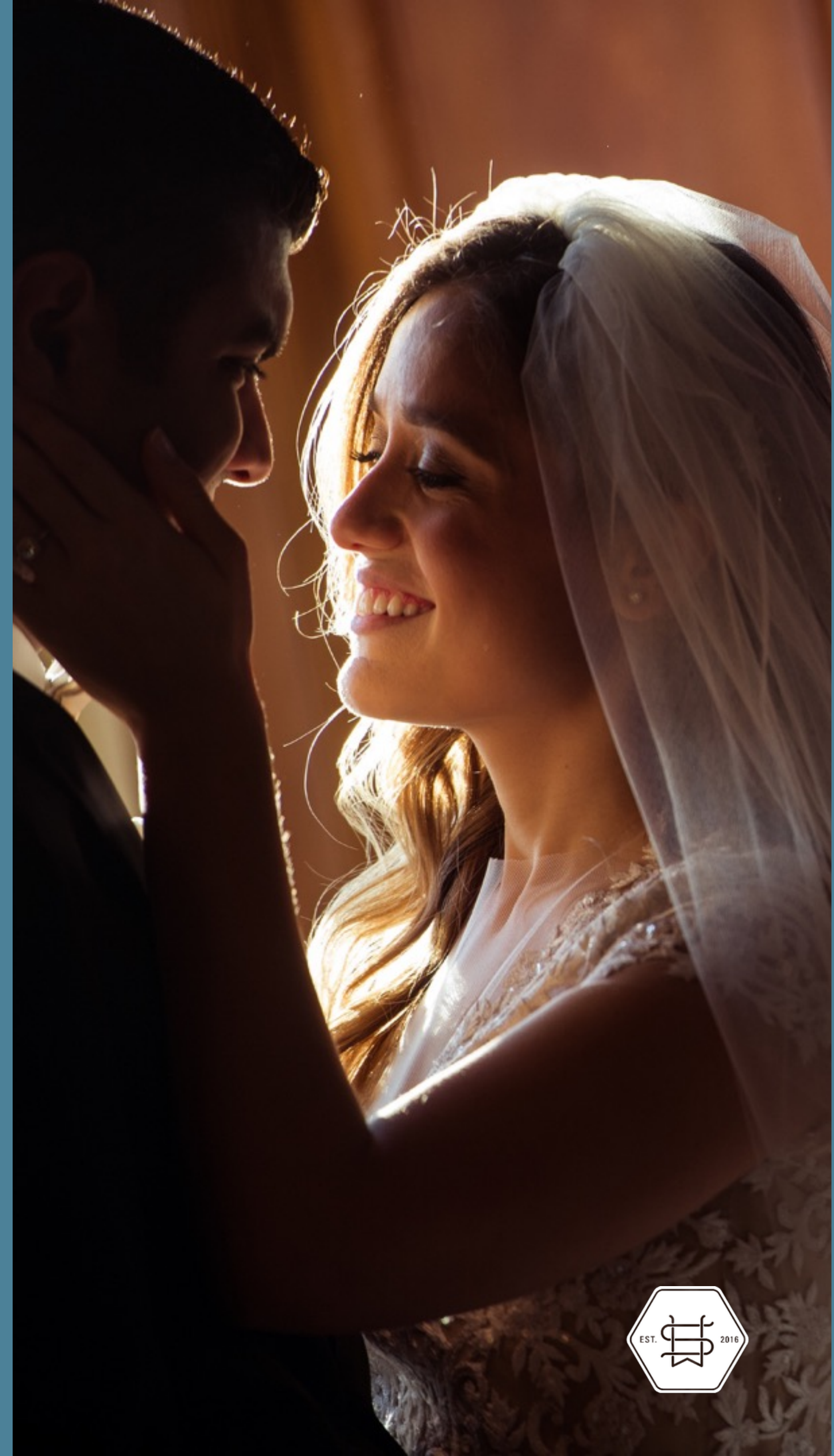
# BUYER'S REMORSE



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- ▶ This one is hard, because it's not about you or your work or even photography at all
- ▶ Listen and commiserate
- ▶ Ask what they want
- ▶ Usually this happens before they've even seen the pictures
- ▶ DO NOT let them make you feel guilty for charging what you're worth



# ISSUES BEYOND YOU

- ▶ Much of the time, huge complaints have nothing to do with you at all
- ▶ “Why are there no table shots?” can really mean “I didn’t spend enough time with my extended family at the wedding and my mom is mad at me about it.”
- ▶ “I hate all of the pictures of me” might mean “I worked out for months before the wedding but still don’t like how I look.”
- ▶ You have no idea what’s going on inside people’s minds or hearts, what is really going on in their family, or even their marriage
- ▶ Listen, ask what you can do, evaluate





# OTHER THINGS TO REMEMBER

- ▶ Your clients are not your friends
- ▶ Sometimes you are at fault, we all are. Don't let it destroy you!
- ▶ It's not personal, it's just business!
- ▶ Being firm with clients and frustrated with difficulties does not mean that I/we don't care about our businesses and all of our clients
- ▶ Don't be afraid to take time to respond or talk to your lawyer
- ▶ Take things to email when you're worried about details later
- ▶ It's not personal, it's just business!

